



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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## **Beware of telephone and Internet pesticide sales**

OLYMPIA – It can't be said too many times, "if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." Telephone and Internet marketers offering pesticides may make false claims and could be selling illegal products. Protect yourself. Know what you're buying. If you are not sure, contact a local pesticide distributor to compare prices and get information on the concentration of active ingredients. If you suspect bogus claims, call the state Department of Agriculture toll-free at (877) 301-4555.

"We've already heard from a few concerned consumers," said Scott Nielsen, a pesticide specialist at Department of Agriculture. Most often, the pesticides offered are weed control products. The telephone sales pitch will often claim longer periods of effectiveness than the chemical can realistically provide. Usually, the concentration of chemical is much lower than what is available from a local pesticide distributor. The products will be sold at a higher price; and, the sales pitch will claim the difference is offset by its longer, sometimes several years', performance.

Worse, once a credit card number is obtained, additional products and charges may continue to arrive monthly.

Also of concern are pesticides offered for sale via the Internet. The products being sold often are state restricted-use pesticides, which means both the seller and the buyer must be licensed by the state Department of Agriculture. A seller must be licensed as a pesticide dealer and must keep sales records. The buyer must hold an appropriate pesticide applicator's license and, depending on the amount purchased and shipped, may be required to meet other state regulations.

Products shipped from other regions of the U.S. may have the same brand name or EPA registration number a buyer would expect to find in Washington, but they may not be labeled for use on Washington crops. Products sold through in-state manufacturing and distribution channels are properly packaged and labeled for use on crops in Washington. It is up to the purchaser to make sure they are receiving the properly labeled products.

The state Department of Agriculture is collecting information on telephone and Internet pesticide sales to ensure that the products offered are properly registered. If you suspect a sales pitch is too good to be true, please get as much information as possible on the product and the company and then call (877) 301-4555.

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